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Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 155147

FOLLOWING REPEAT DAKAR 4545 ACTION SECSTATE INFO LONDON PARIS USUN ABIDJAN ALGIERS LAGOS RABAT JUNE 15

QUOTE CO N F I D E N T I A L DAKAR 4545

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (FOR PASSING INSTRUCTIONS)

DEPT PASS TO OAU COLLECTIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, SG
SUBJECT: WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED FROM THE SENGHOR VISIT

1. SUMMARY: SENGHOR'S VISIT HELPED US LEARN WHY HE FEELS SO STRONGLY ABOUT THE SOVIET-CUBAN THREAT IN AFRICA COMPARED TO OTHER AFRICANS WHO DO NOT APPEAR TO BE OVERLY CONCERNED. HIS LONG EXPOSURE TO THE RUTHLESS, STALINIST COMMUNIST PARTY IN FRANCE LEFT HIM WITH THE BELIEF THAT NO COMMUNISTS, WHETHER RUSSIAN, CUBAN, OR OTHER CAN BE ENGAGED IN CONSTRUCTIVE WORK IN AFRICA. HIS DEEP COMMITMENT TO THE DIGNITY OF THE BLACK RACE LEADS HIM TO FEEL THAT THIS IS BEING VIOLATED BY THE CUBANS, SOVIETS AND ALGERIANS IN ANGOLA AND MAURITANIA. CONFIDENTIAL

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SENGHOR FEELS THAT HIS WARNINGS AND HIS VISIT HAVE HELPED NUDGE U.S. OPINION TOWARD THE VIEW THAT THERE IS A DANGER TO US INTERESTS IN AFRICA IN THE CUBAN-SOVIET MILITARY PRESENCE. THAT IS REALLY ALL HE WANTED, AND HIS REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE TO AN AFRICAN SELF-HELP EFFORT APPEARS MODEST AND REASONABLE. END SUMMARY.

2. ACCORDING TO THE PRIME MINISTER AND OTHERS WHOM I HAVE SEEN DURING THE PAST FEW DAYS, PRESIDENT SENGHOR IS PLEASED WITH HIS JUNE 2-9 PRIVATE VISIT TO NEW YORK AND

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WASHINGTON. HE FELT THAT HE HAD AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE
TO DELIVER ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN MODERATES, AND THAT
HE WAS GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO ARGUE HIS POINT OF VIEW
BEFORE THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT.
THE SENGHOR VISIT TOOK PLACE RIGHT IN THE MIDST OF A
MAJOR DEBATE IN AMERICAN POLITICAL CIRCLES ON THE NATURE
OF THE US REACTION TO SOVIET/CUBAN ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA.
SENGHOR FEELS THAT HE MADE A USEFUL CONTRIBUTION TO THAT
DEBATE. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, THE QUESTION THAT I
WOULD LIKE TO EXPLORE IN THIS MESSAGE IS WHAT CONCLUSIONS
CAN WE DRAW FROM THE SENGHOR VISIT THAT MIGHT GIVE US
SOME ADDED PERSPECTIVES ON THE NATURE OF THE AFRICAN
PROBLEM.

3. SENGHOR IS A PRODUCT OF THE FRENCH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM
OF THE 1930'S, AND OF THE FRENCH POLITICAL SYSTEM OF THE
1940'S AND 50'S. LOOKING BACK AT OUR CONVERSATIONS
SINCE JULY, 1977, ESPECIALLY TWO LONG TALKS WE HAD IN
NEW YORK DURING THE VISIT, I IDENTIFY ONE MAJOR THEME
RELATED TO SENGHOR'S FRENCH EXPERIENCE. THROUGH HIS
TEACHERS, FRIENDS, AND POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS, SENGHOR
HAS HAD EXTENSIVE CONTACTS WITH THE FRENCH COMMUNIST
PARTY. HE HAS KNOWN THE PCF INTIMATELY, AND REACHED THE
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CONCLUSION MANY YEARS AGO THAT THE PARTY IS THE MOST
STALINIST AND RUTHLESS OF THE FREE WORLD'S MARXIST
GROUPINGS. NOTHING IN RECENT TIMES, INCLUDING THE EURO-
COMMUNIST PHENOMENON, HAS CAUSED HIM TO MODIFY THIS VIEW.
NOT ONLY DOES HE DISAGREE WITH THE IDEOLOGY AND METHODS
OF THE PCF, BUT HE BELIEVES THE PCF WILL STOP AT NOTHING
TO DESTROY THOSE FORMER FRIENDS IN THE THIRD WORLD WHO
TURNED AGAINST THE PARTY IN FAVOR OF DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM,
THE WORST HERESY KNOWN TO THE STALINISTS. HE ALSO BELIEVES
THE PCF IS CLOSELY TIED TO THE SOVIETS. IN DESCRIBING
SENGHOR'S VIEW OF THE PCF AND THE SOVIETS, I CAN SAY
WITHOUT HESITATION THAT THE WORD FEAR IS NOT TOO STRONG.
HE FREQUENTLY TALKS ABOUT THE PROSPECT OF SOVIET-PCF
ASSASSINATION ATTEMPTS AGAINST MODERATE AFRICANS, AND
STATES THAT WHILE HE IS NOT WORRIED AT AGE 72, THE YOUNGER
MODERATE CHIEFS OF STATE REFRAIN FROM SPEAKING OUT FOR
THIS VERY REASON.4. SENGHOR'S FEARS HAVE MORE THAN JUST A THEORETICAL
BASE. EVER SINCE SENEGAL BECAME INDEPENDENT IN 1960,
SENGHOR HAS OBSERVED PCF AND SOVIET ACTIVITIES DESIGNED
TO STIR UP AND ASSIT INTERNAL OPPOSITION ELEMENTS. UNTIL
1972. SENGHOR AND HIS ASSOCIATES FELT RELATIVELY CONFI-
DENT IN THEIR ABILITY TO COPE WITH PCF FINANCING AND
TRAINING OF OPPOSITION ELEMENTS, AS WELL AS A VARIETY OF
SUBVERSIVE OPERATIONS BY THE SOVIET EMBASSY. BUT THE
1972 CUBAN ARMED INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA CHANGED EVERY-
THING PSYCHOLOGICALLY. IN SENGHOR'S VIEW, THE CUBAN
ARMY IN ANGOLA REPRESENTED THE FIRST EXTENSION OF DIRECT

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SOVIET MILITARY SUPPORT TO FAVORED ELEMENTS IN A PURELY INTERNAL AFRICAN CONFLICT. UNLIKE A NUMBER OF OUTSIDE OBSERVERS WHO SAW ANGOLA AS ESSENTIALLY A SOVIET/ CUBAN TARGET OF OPPORTUNITY, SENGHOR INTERPRETED THE CUBAN EXPEDITION AS AN ESCALATION OF AN ALREADY EXISTING PATTERN OF SOVIET INTERVENTION IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF AFRICAN STATES. IN SHORT, SENGHOR LOOKED AT ANGOLA AND REACHED THE FOLLOWING CONCLUSION: THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO UNDERMINE MODERATES THROUGH THE PCF
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OR THEIR OWN EMBASSIES. NOW THEY ARE USING CUBAN TROOPS TO BRING ILLEGITIMATE OPPOSITION GROUPS TO POWER. WHAT IS TO STOP THEM FROM CREATING AND FINANCING SUCH GROUPS IN MY OWN COUNTRY, RECOGNIZING THEM, AND THEN PROVIDING THEM WITH ARMED CUBAN BACKING TO TAKE OVER? PCF AND SOVIET EMBASSY SUBVERSION IS ONE THING. BUT CUBAN SOLDIERS ARE ANOTHER.

5. TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE FOR SENGHOR, NOT ONLY DID HE REACH THIS ALARMING CONCLUSION, BUT HE FOUND THAT OTHER OBSERVERS, ESPECIALLY AMERICAN AFRICANISTS, WERE REACHING TOTALLY DIFFERENT CONCLUSIONS ABOUT ANGOLA; THAT IT REPRESENTED AN UNSTABLE TARGET OF OPPORTUNITY AND NOT A PATTERN OF SOVIET EXPANSIONISM; THAT THE CUBANS WERE REACTING TO SOUTH AFRICAN INTERVENTION AND NOT WORKING FOR THE SOVIETS; AND THAT ANY AFRICAN COUNTRY WHICH PRACTICES DEMOCRACY, HAS GOOD HUMAN RIGHTS, AND KEEPS EVERYONE WELL FED, HAS NOTHING TO FEAR. BASED ON HIS EXPERIENCE WITH THE PCF AND THE SOVIET UNION, AND HAVING LIVED IN FRANCE DURING MUNICH AND APPEASEMENT, SENGHOR CONSIDERED THIS VIEW INCREDIBLY NAIVE. THAT IS THE BASIS FOR SENGHOR'S STATEMENTS TO ME AND OTHERS THAT AMERICAN THINKING ABOUT AFRICA IS MUDDLED. IN EFFECT, SENGHOR FEELS WE DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT IS REALLY GOING ON. OUR TIMID INVOLVEMENT IN SHABA ONE, AND OUR NEUTRALITY ON THE WESTERN SAHARA SERVED TO REINFORCE SENGHOR'S VIEWS SINCE HE CONSIDERS THESE PROBLEMS TO BE PART OF THE PATTERN OF SOVIET EXPANSIONISM IN AFRICA IN LINE WITH LENIN'S THEORY THAT AFRICA IS THE KEY TO EUROPE. THE VIGOROUS AMERICAN RESPONSE TO SHABA TWO JUST A FEW DAYS BEFORE SENGHOR'S ARRIVAL IN THE US HELPED MODIFY HIS VIEW, AND GAVE HIM HOPE THAT HIS ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION IN AFRICA MIGHT YET BE ACCEPTED
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BY THE USG LEADERSHIP. IN SHORT, SENGHOR DID NOT COME TO THE UNITED STATES WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF PERSUADING US TO DO SOMETHING. ABOVE ALL, HE WANTED US TO AGREE WITH HIM ABOUT THE DANGER. IT IS MY IMPRESSION THAT HE

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WAS NOT DISAPPOINTED.

6. THE FOREGOING DESCRIBED THE PROFOUND INFLUENCE OF SENGHOR'S FRENCH EXPERIENCES ON HIS PERCEPTIONS OF CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN SECURITY PROBLEMS. IMPORTANT AS THESE INFLUENCES HAVE BEEN, HOWEVER, WE SHOULD NOT MAKE THE MISTAKE OF CATEGORIZING SENGHOR AS A BLACK FRENCHMAN, WHICH IS THE WAY A NUMBER OF ANGLOPHONE AFRICANS VIEW HIM. NOTHING COULD BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH. SENGHOR IS FIRST AND FOREMOST A BLACK INTERNATIONALIST. DESPITE HIS ADVOCACY OF CULTURAL INTERCHANGE AND RACIAL MISCEGENATION, HIS FIRST AND FIERCEST LOYALTY IS TO BLACKNESS. THIS ELEMENT IS ALSO VERY IMPORTANT IN HIS ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN PROBLEMS.

7. IN ANGOLA, SENGHOR WAS NOT DISTURBED BY SAVIMBI'S USE OF SOUTH AFRICAN ASSISTANCE. "WHEN YOU ARE AT WAR, YOU WILL TAKE ASSISTANCE FROM THE DEVIL," HE TOLD A VISITING JOURNALIST. WHAT BOTHERS HIM IS THAT THE MPLA, IN HIS VIEW, REPRESENTS ONLY THE MIDDLE CLASS MULATTOS OF LUANDA CITY. SAVIMBI, ON THE OTHER HAND, REPRESENTS THE MASSES OF THE ANGOLAN BLACK AFRICANS. NOT ONLY ARE THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS PURSUING THEIR STRATEGIC DESIGNS IN ANGOLA, BUT ARE ALSO HELPING TO KEEP THE BLACK MAJORITY FROM THEIR RIGHTFUL CLAIM TO POWER IN SENGHOR'S VIEW.

8. IN MAURITANIA AND THE WESTERN SAHARA, SENGHOR BELIEVES THE ALGERIANS ARE PURSUING THEIR OBJECTIVE OF SUBVERTING THE BLACK GOVERNMENTS OF THE SAHEL BY PLAYING ON RACIAL ANIMOSITIES AMONG THE TUAREGS. HE CALLS THE ALGERIANS RACISTS WHO WANT TO PERPETUATE THE ARAB-BLACK CLEAVAGE IN AFRICA IN FAVOR OF ALGERIAN CONFIDENTIAL

HEGEMONY. HE CALLS THE CUBANS NO BETTER THAN THE PORTUGUESE BECAUSE HE CLAIMS THEY PILLAGE AFRICAN PROPERTY AND VIOLATE AFRICAN WOMEN. IN SOUTH AFRICA, SENGHOR SAYS THAT OUR POLICY OF AN ARMS EMBARGO IS USELESS. WHAT IS NEEDED IS AN OIL EMBARGO. THIS IS A LOT STRONGER VIEW THAN EXPRESSED BY SOME OF THE FRONTLINE STATES. IN SHORT, BECAUSE SENGHOR IS A MODERATE, A CONSERVATIVE, AND FRENCH-INFLUENCED, SOME PEOPLE TEND TO DISMISS HIM AS A FALSE AFRICAN. BUT THIS IS A MISTAKE, SENGHOR IS AN AFRICAN FIRST, AND VIEWS MOST AFRICAN STRATEGIC PROBLEMS THROUGH RACIAL GLASSES. IN HIS ANALYSIS, THE SOVIETS AND THEIR SURROGATES ARE WILLING TO EXPLOIT RACIAL DIFFERENCES AND SUPPORT RACIAL MINORITIES FOR THEIR OWN STRATEGIC ENDS. HE DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT ABOUT THE FRENCH OR THE AMERICANS.

9. WHERE DOES ALL THIS LEAVE US IN OUR EVALUATION OF THE MESSAGE THAT SENGHOR BROUGHT TO WASHINGTON? IS HE

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JUST A 72-YEAR OLD ANACHRONISM WHO DOES NOT SPEAK FOR
THE MAINSTREAM EVEN OF FRANCOPHONE AFRICAN MUCH LESS THE
ANGLOPHONES? OR DOES HE REPRESENT A DEEP CURRENT OF
FEAR AND APPREHENSION? THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION CAN
ONLY COME FROM MY COLLEAGUES THROUGHOUT AFRICA. MY
FEELING HOWEVER IS THAT SENGHOR IS NOT ALONE IN HIS
VIEWPOINT.

10. SENGHOR MET WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF SEVERAL POINTS
OF VIEW ON AFRICA DURING HIS STAY IN THE US. FROM THOSE
WHO ADVOCATE A MAXIMUM US REACTION TO SOVIET-CUBAN
ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA TO THOSE WHO SAY WE SHOULD DO
NOTHING, AND THOSE IN BETWEEN, I WAS PLEASED TO NOTE
THAT NOBODY TOLD SENGHOR THAT HE REALLY HAS NO
PROBLEM. EVERYONE APPEARED TO AGREE THAT CUBAN TROOPS
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IN AFRICA ARE BAD NEWS. THIS IS ESSENTIALLY WHAT SENGHOR
WANTED TO HEAR, AND I BELIEVE A MAJOR GAP IN UNDER-
STANDING HAS BEEN CLOSED. SENGHOR HAS SAID THAT HIS IS
NOT ASKING FOR US DIRECT INTERVENTION, BUT FEELS THE US
SHOULD HELP AFRICAN MODERATES OBTAIN THE MEANS TO SOLVE
SOME OF THESE PROBLEMS WITHOUT EXTERNAL INTERVENTION.
HE DID NOT NEGLECT ECONOMIC REQUIREMENTS IN ANY OF HIS
PRESENTATIONS.
I BELIEVE THAT MAINSTREAM WASHINGTON FOUND THIS MESSAGE
NOT UNREASONABLE. COHEN. UNQUOTE VANCE

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